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ABSTRACT

To be prepared for a successful college experience, students must know certain academic subjects and have the skills to demonstrate their competencies in these subjects. This booklet outlines what college entrants need to know and be able to do to enter college in Alabama. As of July 1989, admissions standards of all Alabama public colleges and universities reflect the knowledge and skills described here: (1) basic academic competencies--reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematics, reasoning and studying; and (2) basic academic subjects--English, the arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and foreign languages. Minimum requirements for the Advanced Academic Diploma are also given. (KM)

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Academic Preparation For College

English

The Arts

Science

Social
Studies

Mathematics

Foreign
Language

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What Students Need To Know
And Be Able To Do To Enter
College In Alabama

HE 822 822

In 1988, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education adopted a policy on Preparation for College-Level Study. This booklet contains the elements of preparation included in that policy. Two companion brochures, "Set Your Sights on College" and "Financial Aid Sources in Alabama," are also available for students and parents as well as anyone else who may assist students with their decisions. For additional information, contact the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, One Court Square, Suite 221, Montgomery, Alabama 36197-0001.

Preparation For College-Level Study

To be prepared for a successful college experience, students must know certain academic subjects and must have the skills to demonstrate their competencies in these subjects. In recent years many college entrants have not had the knowledge and skills needed for higher education. Many have been severely limited in their choice of college or have been unable to pursue their choice of program. Many unprepared students have dropped out in frustration or have failed their courses. This booklet is meant for students and parents, teachers, counselors, and education administrators, and all others concerned with adequate preparation for college.

Academic Preparation For College is based on the premise that, in order to improve preparation for college, the necessary outcomes for high school study must be identified: the knowledge and skills needed to obtain the full benefits of college study. This booklet outlines what college entrants need to know and be able to do. It represents the combined judgments of hundreds of educators all over the United States, as published by the Educational EQuality Project of the College Board. **Effective July 1989 all Alabama public colleges and universities will publish admissions standards which reflect these necessary knowledges and skills.**

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education, which coordinates higher education in Alabama, endorses the basic academic competencies and subjects described in this book as the means by which students may be prepared for college-level study. During the development of the policy on preparation for college-level study, educators from many Alabama public institutions provided advice and assistance. Following the Commission's adoption of the policy, several key educational agencies endorsed it. These agencies are listed in the back of this booklet. The Alabama Commission on Higher Education is grateful for their support and counsel.

I. The Basic Academic Competencies

The Basic Academic Competencies are the broad intellectual skills essential to effective work in all fields of college study. They provide a link across the disciplines of knowledge although they are not specific to any particular discipline.

The Basic Academic Competencies are reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematics, reasoning, and studying. These competencies are interrelated to and interdependent with the Basic Academic Subjects. Without such competencies, knowledge of history, science, language, and all other subjects is unattainable.

The Basic Academic Competencies are developed abilities, the outcomes of learning and intellectual discourse. These are different levels of competency; they can be defined in measurable terms.

Although the Basic Academic Competencies are not always identified explicitly, spelling them out provides a way to tell students what is expected of them. Knowledge of what is expected is crucial to effective learning.

In order to do effective work in college, it is essential that all students have the following academic competencies.

☆ Reading

- The ability to identify and comprehend the main and subordinate ideas in a written work and to summarize the ideas in one's own words.
- The ability to recognize different purposes and methods of writing, to identify a writer's point of view and tone, and to interpret a writer's meaning inferentially as well as literally.
- The ability to separate one's personal opinions and assumptions from a writer's.
- The ability to vary one's reading speed and method (survey, skim, review, question, and master) according to the type of material and one's purpose for reading.
- The ability to use the features of books and other reference materials, such as table of contents, preface, introduction, titles and subtitles, index, glossary, appendix, bibliography.

- The ability to define unfamiliar words by decoding, using contextual clues, or by using a dictionary.

★ Writing

- The ability to conceive ideas about a topic for the purpose of writing.
- The ability to organize, select, and relate ideas and to outline and develop them in coherent paragraphs.
- The ability to write standard English sentences with correct:
 - sentence structure;
 - verb forms;
 - punctuation, capitalization, possessives, plural forms, and other matters of mechanics;
 - word choice and spelling.
- The ability to vary one's writing style, including vocabulary and sentence structure, for different readers and purposes.
- The ability to improve one's own writing by restructuring, correcting errors, and rewriting.
- The ability to gather information from primary and secondary sources; to write a report using this research; to quote, paraphrase, and summarize accurately; and to cite sources properly.

★ Speaking and Listening

- The ability to engage critically and constructively in the exchange of ideas, particularly during class discussions and conferences with instructors.
- The ability to answer and ask questions coherently and concisely, and to follow spoken instructions.
- The ability to identify and comprehend the main and subordinate ideas in lectures and discussions, and to report accurately what others have said.
- The ability to conceive and develop ideas about a topic for the purpose of speaking to a group; to choose and organize related ideas; to present them clearly in standard English; and to evaluate similar presentations by others.
- The ability to vary one's use of spoken language to suit different situations.

★ Mathematics

- The ability to perform, with reasonable accuracy, the computations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division using natural numbers,

fractions, decimals, and integers.

- The ability to make and use measurements in both traditional and metric units.
- The ability to use effectively the mathematics of:
 - integers, fractions, and decimals;
 - ratios, proportions, and percentages;
 - roots and powers;
 - algebra;
 - geometry.
- The ability to make estimates and approximations, and to judge the reasonableness of a result.
- The ability to formulate and solve a problem in mathematical terms.
- The ability to select and use appropriate approaches and tools in solving problems (mental computation, trial and error, paper-and-pencil techniques, calculator, and computer).
- The ability to use elementary concepts of probability and statistics.

★ Reasoning

- The ability to identify and formulate problems, as well as the ability to propose and evaluate ways to solve them.
- The ability to recognize and use inductive and deductive reasoning, and to recognize fallacies in reasoning.
- The ability to draw reasonable conclusions from information found in various sources, whether written, spoken, or displayed in tables and graphs, and to defend one's conclusions rationally.
- The ability to comprehend, develop, and use concepts and generalizations.
- The ability to distinguish between fact and opinion.

★ Studying

This set of abilities is different in kind from those that precede it. They are set forth here because they constitute the key abilities in learning how to learn. Successful study skills are necessary for acquiring the other five competencies as well as for achieving the desired outcomes in the Basic Academic Subjects. Students are unlikely to be efficient in any part of their work without these study skills.

- The ability to set study goals and priorities consistent with stated course objectives and one's own progress, to establish surroundings and habits

conducive to learning independently or with others, and to follow a schedule that accounts for both short- and long-term projects.

- The ability to locate and use resources external to the classroom (for example, libraries, computers, interviews, and direct observation), and to incorporate knowledge from such sources into the learning process.
- The ability to develop and use general and specialized vocabularies, and to use them for reading, writing, speaking, listening, computing, and studying.
- The ability to understand and to follow customary instructions for academic work in order to recall, comprehend, analyze, summarize, and report the main ideas from reading, lectures, and other academic experiences; and to synthesize knowledge and apply it to new situations.
- The ability to prepare for various types of examinations and to devise strategies for pacing, attempting or omitting questions, thinking, writing, and editing according to the type of examination; to satisfy other assessments of learning in meeting course objectives such as laboratory performance, class participation, simulation, and students' evaluations.
- The ability to accept constructive criticism and learn from it.

II. The Basic Academic Subjects

Study in the Basic Academic Subjects provides the detailed knowledge and skills necessary for effective work in college. Students who intend to go to college will need this basic learning in order to obtain the full benefits of higher education. This learning provides the foundation for college study in all fields.

For successful college work in certain fields, students will need more than this basic learning. This chapter also outlines the more extensive learning necessary for study in those fields.

The Basic Academic Subjects are English, the arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and foreign language. Although these subjects are presented separately, they depend on each other in many ways.

The Basic Academic Subjects are presented in two parts: the first explains *why* preparation in a subject is important for college entrants; the second outlines *what* college entrants need to know and be able to do in that subject area.

The knowledge and skills needed for college are *outcomes* of secondary school study. These outcomes can be achieved in a variety of ways. Consequently, although *Academic Preparation for College* is intended to provide a framework for designing secondary school curricula, this chapter itself does not describe such curricula. It does not give specific course titles and contents. It goes beyond prescribing years of study to describe what students actually need to learn as a result of their study. It outlines the knowledge and skills that students will need in order to have a fair chance of getting full value from their college education.

Acquiring the knowledge and skills provided by the Basic Academic Subjects involves careful selection of courses and sustained study before college. It is important, therefore, to indicate why students preparing for college need to make this effort and what they need to learn in the course of their high school work.

☆ English

Why?

The arts and skills of English have been at the core of college preparation for

generations, and so they are today in the midst of enormous technological and social change. The skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking will be necessary as college students are called on to read a wide variety of materials; to write essays, reports, and term papers; to express themselves aloud; and to listen to and learn from discussions and lectures. English language skills serve as the foundation for all these activities.

The technology created in today's communications revolution will be used by people, and it is the education of these individuals that commands attention. Language—written and spoken, heard and read—is central to that education. Competence in language serves a variety of purposes: accomplishing the business of daily life, communicating attitudes and ideas, expanding thought, and informing the imagination.

Because language skills are interrelated, it is not possible to isolate them in practice, even though here they are outlined separately. Moreover, while this statement includes outcomes in reading, writing, and speaking and listening as part of the study of English, it is evident that such abilities are important to and should be developed in every subject. Although literature, language, and composition may be the special province of English, competence in writing, for example, pertains to all academic disciplines. Thus, skill in writing should be developed in other subjects as well as in English.

What?

The learning outcomes in the next three groups either provide greater detail concerning the Basic Academic Competencies in reading, writing, and speaking and listening outlined in Chapter 1, or they go beyond those competencies to specify additional learning outcomes. College entrants will need the following preparation in English.

Reading and Literature

- The ability to read critically by asking pertinent questions about what they have read, by recognizing assumptions and implications, and by evaluating ideas.
- The ability to read a literary text analytically, seeing relationships between form and content.
- The ability to read with understanding a range of literature, rich in quality and representative of different literary forms and various cultures.
- Interest in and a sense of inquiry about written works.
- The ability to respond actively and imaginatively to literature.

Writing

- The recognition that writing is a process involving a number of elements,

including collecting information and formulating ideas, determining their relationships, drafting, arranging paragraphs in an appropriate order and building transitions between them, and revising what has been written.

- The ability to write as a way of discovering and clarifying ideas.
- The ability to write appropriately for different occasions, audiences, and purposes (persuading, explaining, describing, telling a story).
- Skill and assurance in using the conventions of standard written English.

Speaking and Listening

- The ability to engage in discussion as both speaker and listener—interpreting, analyzing, and summarizing.
- The ability to contribute to classroom discussions in a way that is readily understood by listeners—that is, succinct and to the point.
- The ability to present an opinion persuasively.
- The ability to recognize the intention of a speaker and to be aware of the technique a speaker is using to affect an audience.
- The ability to recognize and take notes on important points in lectures and discussions.
- The ability to question inconsistency in logic and to separate fact from opinion.

Language

College entrants will also need to understand in some depth the following principles concerning the English language.

- English, like every other language, operates according to grammatical systems and patterns of usage.
- English continues to undergo change.
- English is influenced by other languages, both ancient and modern.
- English has several levels of usage, and consequently the language appropriate in some situations may not be appropriate in others.
- English has many dialects.
- English words, like those of other languages, gather meaning from their context and carry connotation.

☆ The Arts

Why?

The arts—visual arts, theater, music, and dance—challenge and extend

human experience. They provide means of expression that go beyond ordinary speaking and writing. They can express intimate thoughts and feelings. They are a unique record of diverse cultures and how these cultures have developed over time. They provide distinctive ways of understanding human beings and nature. The arts are creative modes by which all people can enrich their lives both by self-expression and response to the expressions of others.

Works of art often involve subtle meanings and complex systems of expression. Fully appreciating such works requires the careful reasoning and sustained study that lead to informed insight. Moreover, just as thorough understanding of science requires laboratory or field work, so fully understanding the arts involves first-hand work in them.

Preparation in the arts will be valuable to college entrants whatever their intended field of study. The actual practice of the arts can engage the imagination, foster flexible ways of thinking, develop disciplined effort, and build self-confidence. Appreciation of the arts is integral to the understanding of other cultures sought in the study of history, foreign language, and social sciences. Preparation in the arts will also enable college students to engage in and profit from advanced study, performance, and studio work in the arts. For some, such college-level work will lead to careers in the arts. For many others, it will permanently enhance the quality of their lives, whether they continue artistic activity as an avocation or appreciation of the arts as observers and members of audiences.

What?

Students going to college will profit from the following preparation in the arts.

- The ability to understand and appreciate the unique qualities of each of the arts.
- The ability to appreciate how people of various cultures have used the arts to express themselves.
- The ability to understand and appreciate different artistic styles and works from representative historical periods and cultures.
- Some knowledge of the social and intellectual influences affecting artistic form.
- The ability to use the skills, media, tools, and processes required to express themselves in one or more of the arts.

College entrants also will profit from more intensive preparation in at least one of the four areas of the arts: visual arts, theater, music, and dance.

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If the preparation of college entrants is in the *visual arts*, they will need the following knowledge and skills.

- The ability to identify and describe—using the appropriate vocabulary—various visual art forms from different historical periods.
- The ability to analyze the structure of a work of visual art.
- The ability to evaluate a work of visual art.
- To know how to express themselves in one or more of the visual art forms, such as drawing, painting, photography, weaving, ceramics, and sculpture.

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If the preparation of college entrants is in *theater*, they will need the following knowledge and skills.

- The ability to identify and describe—using the appropriate vocabulary—different kinds of plays from different historical periods.
- The ability to analyze the structure, plot, characterization, and language of a play, both as a literary document and as a theater production.
- The ability to evaluate a theater production.
- To know how to express themselves by acting in a play or by improvising, or by writing a play, or by directing or working behind the scenes of a theater production.

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If the preparation of college entrants is in *music*, they will need the following knowledge and skills.

- The ability to identify and describe—using the appropriate vocabulary—various musical forms from different historical periods.
- The ability to listen perceptively to music, distinguishing such elements as pitch, rhythm, timbre, and dynamics.
- The ability to read music.
- The ability to evaluate a musical work or performance.
- To know how to express themselves by playing an instrument, singing in a group or individually, or composing music.

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If the preparation of college entrants is in *dance*, they will need the following knowledge and skills.

- The ability to identify and describe—using the appropriate vocabulary—dances of various cultures and historical periods.
- The ability to analyze various techniques, styles, and choreographic forms.
- The ability to evaluate a dance performance.
- To know how to express themselves through dancing or choreography.

☆ Mathematics

Why?

All people need some knowledge of mathematics to function well in today's society. Mathematics is an indispensable language of science and technology, as well as business and finance. All people, therefore, need some fluency in this language if they are to contribute to and fare well in our contemporary world.

More than at any time in the past the knowledge and appreciation of mathematics is essential to students' intellectual development. The advances of recent years in computer science and other highly technical fields such as space science have opened new horizons to those trained in mathematics. Young people who avail themselves of the opportunity to gain strong preparation in mathematics and in the sciences not only will grow intellectually but also keep open the door to a wide range of career choices.

Students going to college need mathematical skills beyond the elementary ones. They need a knowledge of computing to deal with the new age of computers and information systems. They need a knowledge of algebra, geometry, and functions to major in a wide range of fields, from archaeology to zoology. They need a knowledge of statistics for such fields as business, psychology, and economics.

More extensive knowledge and skills, including preparation for calculus, will be needed by college entrants who expect to take advanced mathematics courses or to major in such fields as engineering, economics, premedicine, computer science, or the natural sciences.

What?

The following learning outcomes in some cases provide greater detail concerning the Basic Academic Competency in mathematics, but in other cases go beyond the competencies to specify further outcomes of the study of mathematics. College entrants will need the following mathematical proficiency.

- The ability to apply mathematical techniques in the solution of real-life problems and to recognize when to apply those techniques.
- Familiarity with the language, notation, and deductive nature of mathematics and the ability to express quantitative ideas with precision.
- The ability to use computers and calculators.
- Familiarity with the basic concepts of statistics and statistical reasoning.
- Knowledge in considerable depth and detail of algebra, geometry, and functions.

More specifically, college entrants will need the following preparation in mathematics.

Computing

- Familiarity with computer programming and the use of prepared computer programs in mathematics.
- The ability to use mental computation and estimation to evaluate calculator and computer results.
- Familiarity with the methods used to solve mathematical problems when calculators or computers are the tools.

Statistics

- The ability to gather and interpret data and to represent them graphically.
- The ability to apply techniques for summarizing data using such statistical concepts as average, median, and mode.
- Familiarity with techniques of statistical reasoning and common misuses of statistics.

Algebra

- Skill in solving equations and inequalities.
- Skill in operations with real numbers.
- Skill in simplifying algebraic expressions, including simple rational and radical expressions.
- Familiarity with permutations, combinations, simple counting problems, and the binomial theorem.

Geometry

- Knowledge of two- and three-dimensional figures and their properties.
- The ability to think of two- and three-dimensional figures in terms of symmetry, congruence, and similarity.

- The ability to use the Pythagorean theorem and special right triangle relationships.
- The ability to draw geometrical figures and use geometrical modes of thinking in the solving of problems.

Functions

- Knowledge of relations, functions, and inverses.
- The ability to graph linear and quadratic functions and use them in the interpretation and solution of problems.

College entrants expecting to major in science or engineering or to take advanced courses in mathematics or computer science will need the following more extensive mathematical proficiency.

Computing

- The ability to write computer programs to solve a variety of mathematical problems.
- Familiarity with the methodology of developing computer programs and with the considerations of design, structure, and style that are an important part of this methodology.

Statistics

- Understanding of simulation techniques used to model experimental situations.
- Knowledge of elementary concepts of probability needed in the study and understanding of statistics.

Algebra

- Skill in solving trigonometric, exponential, and logarithmic equations.
- Skill in operations with complex numbers.
- Familiarity with arithmetic and geometric series and with proofs by mathematical induction.
- Familiarity with simple matrix operations and their relation to systems of linear equations.

Geometry

- Appreciation of the role of proofs and axiomatic structure in mathematics and the ability to write proofs.
- Knowledge of analytic geometry in the plane.

- Knowledge of the conic sections.
- Familiarity with vectors and with the use of polar coordinates.

Functions

- Knowledge of various types of functions including polynomial, exponential, logarithmic, and circular functions.
- The ability to graph such functions and to use them in the solution of problems.

☆ Science

Why?

Science—the study of the natural world—is both useful and rewarding in its own right. It provides a sense of the order in the universe and is one of civilization's major intellectual achievements. It is fueled by the same creativity required for art, music, or literature. It relies on curiosity, objectivity, and healthy skepticism. The study of science, then, is excellent preparation for college regardless of students' intended fields of concentration.

Technology, which grows out of scientific discovery, has changed and will continue to change the world in which we live. Our society relies more and more on complex technology. Today's industry, agriculture, business, and professions require people trained in science and technology.

Scientific and technological developments have resulted in complex social issues that must be intelligently addressed. Such developments include: nuclear power, genetic engineering, fertilizers and pesticides, robotics, information and data processing, and organ transplantation. An evaluation of the benefits and risks inherent in these developments requires a knowledge and understanding of science and its methods.

College-bound students will need sufficient scientific knowledge to be aware of themselves as biological organisms in a physical world, to take advantage of career options requiring study of science, and to function effectively as responsible citizens in a society increasingly shaped by science and technology. They will need not only to know about science but also to understand the fundamentals of how to carry out scientific work.

What?

College entrants will need the following preparation in science.

Laboratory and Field Work

- The ability to distinguish between scientific evidence and personal opinion by inquiry and questioning.
- The ability to recognize the role of observation and experimentation in the development of scientific theories.
- Sufficient familiarity with laboratory and field work to ask appropriate scientific questions and to recognize what is involved in experimental approaches to the solutions of such questions.
- The skills to gather scientific information through laboratory, field, and library work.
- The ability to organize and communicate the results obtained by observation and experimentation.

Mathematical Skills

- A quantitative understanding of at least one field of science — an understanding that employs the basic mathematical proficiency for all college entrants outlined in the foregoing description of learning outcomes in mathematics.
- The ability to interpret data presented in tabular and graphic form.
- The ability to draw conclusions or make inferences from data.
- The ability to select and apply mathematical relationships to scientific problems.
- The ability to use mathematical relationships to describe results obtained by observation and experimentation.
- The ability to interpret, in nonmathematical language, relationships presented in mathematical form.

Fundamental Concepts

- Understanding in some depth of the unifying concepts of the life and physical sciences such as cell theory, geological evolution, organic evolution, atomic structure, chemical bonding, and transformations of energy.

Detailed Knowledge

College entrants will need detailed knowledge of at least one field of science, ordinarily the field in which they have a quantitative understanding. This detailed knowledge could be in the earth sciences or in one of the newer, interdisciplinary fields of science. It could also be in one of the more traditional fields: biology, chemistry, or physics.

* * * *

In *biology* such detailed knowledge includes the central concepts, principles, and basic factual material of most, if not all, of the following topics: molecular and cellular aspects of living things, structure and function in plants and animals, genetics, evolution, plant and animal diversity and principles of classification, ecological relationships, and animal behavior.

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In *chemistry* such detailed knowledge includes the central concepts, principles, and basic factual material of most, if not all, of the following topics: states of matter, structure of matter, solutions, reactions of matter (including acid-base and oxidation-reduction), stoichiometry, energy changes in chemical reactions, equilibrium, kinetics, and descriptive chemistry (including periodic classification, metals, nonmetals, and introductory organic chemistry).

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In *physics* such detailed knowledge includes the central concepts, principles, and basic factual material of most, if not all, of the following topics: mechanics, optics, wave phenomena, electricity and magnetism, heat and kinetic theory, atomic and nuclear physics, and relativity.

College entrants expecting to major in scientific fields will need the more extensive mathematical proficiency for such students outlined in the mathematics section. Additional quantitatively based scientific study will also be important.

☆ Social Studies

Why?

The social studies focus on the complexity of our social environment. The subject combines the study of history and the social sciences and promotes skills in citizenship.

We live in a distinct kind of society and all people need to understand how such modern societies function and how they have developed. They need information concerning past civilizations and their links to present ones.

If people are to perform effectively as citizens in a democratic society, they need knowledge about central institutions and values in their own society and

in other major societies around the world. They need to understand the international context of contemporary life. Defining problems and employing various kinds of information in seeking solutions to those problems require the analytical skills developed in the study of history and the social sciences.

Preparation in social studies will be important to college entrants in other ways. It will help them understand major and exciting discoveries about human beings and their social environment as well as the practical results of these discoveries. It will help them understand the context for the arts and sciences. It will help them prepare for advanced work in history and the social sciences, including anthropology, economics, geography, political science, psychology, and sociology.

What?

All college entrants will need the following general understanding of the social studies.

- Basic factual knowledge of major political and economic institutions and their historical development.
- Basic factual knowledge of the social and cultural fields of history.
- An introductory knowledge of the content and concepts of the social sciences.
- A grasp of major trends in the contemporary world (for example, nationalism or urbanization).
- Familiarity with a variety of written, numerical, and visual forms of data.
- Familiarity with the techniques of quantitative and nonquantitative analysis.
- Familiarity with diverse interpretations of data.

History

College entrants will need certain general knowledge and skills in political, social, and cultural history.

- Some understanding of the relationship between present and past, including contrasts between contemporary institutions and values and those of the past, the reasons for these contrasts, and leading continuities between past and present.
- Some understanding of how to approach the problem of change over time.
- The ability to recognize historical cause and effect.
- The ability to identify major historical turning points.
- Some ability to develop historical interpretations.

More specifically, college entrants will need the following basic knowledge.

World History, Geography, and Cultures

- The basic features of major societies and cultures in the contemporary world: their geography, major economic and social structures, political systems, and religions.
- The historical developments underlying present connections and similarities among the world's peoples, and the major differences dividing them.
- The chronology and significance of major events and movements in world history (for example the Renaissance, the Industrial Revolution, and the spread of Islam).
- The international context of contemporary diplomacy and economics.

United States History

- The relationship between events and historical trends in the United States and trends elsewhere in the world, developed through analysis of major similarities and differences.
- The interaction among peoples of different national origins, races, and cultures and how such interaction has shaped American history.
- The chronology and impact of political events, development of governmental and other social institutions, technological and environmental changes, and changes in social and cultural values.

Social Science

College entrants will need the following basic knowledge and skills in the social sciences.

- The ability to understand basic information developed by the social sciences, including statistical data and other materials.
- Familiarity with the basic method of the social sciences, that is, with the framing and empirical testing of hypotheses.
- A basic understanding of at least one of the social sciences and of how its practitioners define and solve problems.
- Familiarity with how to explore a social problem or social institution by means of ideas drawn from several social sciences.

☆ Foreign Language

Why?

Knowledge of another language fosters greater awareness of cultural diversity among the peoples of the world. Individuals who have foreign language skills can appreciate more readily other peoples' values and ways of life. Knowledge of a foreign language serves two other important purposes: it permits informal communication and it facilitates the exchange of ideas and information in such areas as commerce, diplomacy, science, technology, law, and the arts.

By learning another language people gain greater insight into the workings of their native language. They also can come to realize that the patterns of their native language are only one way of viewing the world. They learn how to interpret experience in other ways and to understand the close connection between language and thought.

We live in a multicultural nation. Many people speak a home language other than English. Some of these people seek to improve their proficiency in that other language and to preserve their cultural heritage. In doing so they preserve and develop a valuable national resource.

The classical languages and their literatures show the pervasive influence of Greek and Roman cultures on social and political institutions throughout Western history. Many of the words of English, Spanish, and the other major Western languages are derived from Latin. Besides such derivatives, actual words and phrases from the classical languages are present in English, particularly in law and medicine.

College entrants need a background in another language to engage in advanced study in such fields as languages, literature, and history. Knowledge of a foreign language helps students prepare for careers in commerce, international relations, law, science, and the arts.

What?

College entrants will need proficiency in another language and culture that provides the following skills.

- The ability to ask and answer questions and maintain a simple conversation in areas of immediate need and on very familiar topics.
- The ability to pronounce the language well enough to be intelligible to native speakers.
- The ability to understand, with some repetition, simple questions and statements.

- The ability to read and understand the information presented in a simple paragraph.
- The ability to write a short paragraph on a familiar topic.
- The ability to deal with some everyday situations in the culture such as greetings, leave-takings, buying food, and asking directions.

Students with this basic proficiency will also need some knowledge of the culture, history, and life patterns of the society or societies in which the language is spoken.

College entrants who expect to follow an advanced program of study in another language or in other subjects requiring language skills will need a greater proficiency that provides the following skills.

- The ability to engage in conversation about such subjects as school activities, personal interests, and autobiographical information.
- The ability to understand the essential points of a lecture, narrative, or explanation delivered at moderate speed.
- The ability to read and comprehend some literature and most factual information in nontechnical prose such as newspaper articles addressed to the general reader.
- The ability to write several paragraphs of reasonably coherent and correct prose to produce summaries, descriptions of events, or social correspondence.
- The ability to handle routine social situations in a culturally correct manner showing understanding of common rules of how individuals behave toward one another.

Students with this greater proficiency also will need some knowledge of the history, geography, institutions, current political situation, and the intellectual and artistic achievements of the society or societies in which the language is spoken.

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Learning outcomes in a classical language take a different form, since Latin and ancient Greek are generally taught not as spoken languages but as literary languages. Thus, the two principal outcomes are reading comprehension and some knowledge of Roman or Greek culture. The proficiency expected of

college entrants whose language preparation is in Latin or Greek is reflected in the following skills.

- The ability to understand reading materials of low difficulty, that is, adapted or simplified texts.
- The ability to give a reasonably accurate account of the contents of the reading material by answering questions, paraphrasing, or summarizing.

Students intending to undertake advanced study in a classical language will need, in addition, the following skills.

- The ability to understand authentic unsimplified prose or poetry without undue reliance on a dictionary.
- The ability to translate prose or poetry into reasonably accurate English.

Advanced Academic Diploma Requirements

This booklet has described what students need to know and be able to do to enter college in Alabama, to avoid having to take non-credit remedial courses, and to have the best chance of having a successful college experience. While the booklet does not specify particular courses, it does specify the kind of knowledge a student will need from the disciplines of English, the arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and foreign language. In deciding on specific courses to take in high school, the student would do well to elect the State Department of Education Advanced Academic Diploma track. Some of the electives in the Advanced Academic Diploma track should be taken in the arts.

The Advanced Academic Diploma track is available at every public high school in Alabama. The following minimum requirements have been set by the Alabama State Department of Education for completion of the Advanced Academic Diploma:

English	<i>4 units</i>
Foreign Language	<i>2 units</i>
Mathematics	<i>3 units</i>
• Geometry • Algebra II • Math Elective	
Social Studies	<i>4 units</i>
• Must include World History	
Science	<i>3 units</i>
• Life Science (Biology) • Physical Science (Chemistry, Physics, Earth Science)	
Health Education	<i>½ unit</i>
Physical Education	<i>1 unit</i>
Electives	<i>4½ units</i>
TOTAL	<i>22 units</i>

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education appreciates the endorsement by these agencies of the College Preparation Policy:

Alabama Association of School Boards

Alabama Christian Education Association

Alabama Congress of Parents and Teachers

Alabama Council for School Administration and Supervision

Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education

Alabama Private Schools Association

Alabama School Counselors Association

Alabama State Department of Education

Council of University Presidents

State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee

The material in this brochure concerning Basic Academic Competencies and Basic Academic Subjects is drawn from **Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do**, Copyright 1983, by the College Entrance Examination Board, New York.

Notes

Alabama Commission on Higher Education
Suite 221 , One Court Square
Montgomery, Alabama 36197-0001